

1764

LONGMAN
LITERARY
SOCIETY

T H E

C O N T R A S T.

A

F A M I L I A R E P I S T L E

T O

Mr. C. CHURCHILL,

O N R E A D I N G

H I S P O E M c a l l e d I N D E P E N D E N C E.

By a N E I G H B O U R.

What can you (Reverend *Levi*) here take ill?
Men had their Faults, and Men will have them still:
He that hath none, and lives as Angels do,
Must be an Angel: But what's that to you?

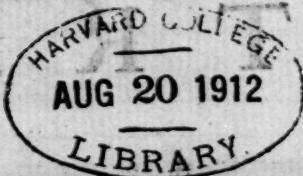
Earl of Roscommon.

L O N D O N:

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T H E

C O N T R A S T.

YES, I must write, *Minerva*; having view'd
A glorious theme, most gloriously pursu'd;
Favour, or favour not, my thanks I'll give
To him, who teaches, as I wish, to live:
Accept them, *Churchill*, in this plain address,
For pointing out, in your's, my happiness:
I am that happy *Man*, or *Bard* (you'll find)
Who, 'bove controlment, dare to speak my mind.

Full forty years (thank Heaven) I have known
 To value time, and make that time my own :
 Almost as long not far from Court have been,
 And various favour, and disfavour, seen.
 Why not the same?—Let sycophants declare—
 My deeds the same, the same my studies were.
 Calumny flies about, and, always wrong,
 Yet fixing somewhere, swells the fland'rous tongue.
 Perhaps enough they saw, with envious eyes,
 To keep him down who never aim'd to rise.—
 No;—Independence, and a calm retreat,
 Which, *Churchill*, thou hast sung, and sung so sweet,
 Left but one wish, to heighten the design
 Of solid comfort, and that wish was mine.
 Let me then *bail* with thee the homely cell,
 Where *Independence* still vouchsafes to dwell.
 I am not proud, nor do I shed a tear,
 If a lord comes, or not ;—a *friend* is here.

My spirit is too tame to give offence ;
 Not *Law* shall keep my door, but *Innocence* :
 While, nor buoy'd up by hope, nor aw'd by fear,
 Sweet satisfaction fills the circling year ;
 While *Freedom* every guiltless art employs,
 To give a poignant relish to the joys,
 The mighty joys, your nervous lines avow :
 Before 'twas fancy ; but I feel them now.

For, this *my* Independence to the *Mind*
 I owe ; while *your's* seems of another kind.
 'Twas not *your* fate to sing for empty praise,
 Or curse the barren ornament of Bays.—
 Two thousand pounds!—I am so *dull* a creature,
 As ev'n to think, *there's no such sum in nature*.
 Two thousand pounds!—and in so short a time!
 For writing—satyr!—'tis almost a crime :
 At least in this our age, there's not a poet
 But will, astonish'd, ask—to what you owe it?

To party, or to merit? I am loth
 To say the former; be it then to both :
 For who denies you merit? who, to raise,
 Had they your strength, a monument of praise?

I saw in thy first *Rosciad's* sparkling line
 The dawn of an exalted genius shine ;
 And, with a blaze, still rising higher since,
 In the great pattern of a patriot Prince.
 'Till *Independence* claim'd my best esteem ;
 So bright the poet, and so bright the theme :
 Tho' oft these glories you are pleas'd to shroud,
 With the thin covering of a misty cloud;
 Tho' with strange negligence you oft affect
 To fall, or seem too proud to be correct :
 This I regard not, nor the sleepy strain ;
 I know, rough diamonds still their worth retain.
 But when I find thee somewhat more than *Scot*,
 Darting thy pointed thorns, *provok'd*, or not;

I can-

I cannot praise, I cannot but condemn,
 And wish thy mounted sp'rit a little phlegm :
 More so, when I a wounded friend have seen,
 So sensible, that were thy sword less keen,
 It surely would have cut him to the heart :
 I sigh'd, and wish'd ev'n *Churchill* the like smart ;
 Could there be found a pen, whose nib could pass
 Thy breast-plate through, piercing the triple brafs :
 Could there be found a man, who fear'd no drub,
 And dar'd with *Hercules* to wield a club :
 But it was passion, passion for a friend ;
 And vain the wish, tho' vainer to contend.

Yet wonder not; * *I am, I own, a man,*
By Nature form'd on a quite different plan;
 Diff'rent in principle, (or by desire,
 Or education) as poetic fire :

* Page 8.

My early years were tutor'd in such Rules,
 By the best master * in the best of schools:
 My reason took its bent from him, I own;
 Yet *swear I blind obedience to none.*

No party-slave, I can as well embrace
 A man of different sect as different face,
 If I but thought him honest and sincere,
 In disavowing tenets I revere.

If, or more dull, or bright, a man should be,
 And see not the same rainbow that you see;
 Shall he be hang'd for this? be crucified?
 Or, torture worse than these, be *Churchillied?*

Where is your boasted freedom, if to me,
 In my own way, you leave not, to be free?
 Why This at your dread bar be deem'd a fault,
 To think sincerely as I ever thought?

* Dr. *Snape.*

I speak

I speak not for myself;—do what you will;
'Tis not for me to court, or dread, your quill;
Not for myself;—but I must feel for those,
You treat, *Drawcansir*-like, as general foes:
My years pay praise or censure small regard,
When 'tis too late *from man* to seek reward.
So free, and yet so just, I fain wou'd live,
As where all things are due, all things to give.
Many, yes many, I could praise of them,
Whom you have prais'd;—condemn where you condemn;
For, where's the statesman, parson, painter, who,
With some few faults, have not their virtues too?
For these I'd praise them, (were it my design
To dash this scroll with *any* name but thine;)
And, tho' thy pow'rs to satyrize were giv'n,
I'd leave their vices to themselves, and Heav'n.

But

But 'tis a gift,—and Nature would complain,
 Were such a mighty gift bestow'd in vain :
 It is the *Gotham* where you reign supreme ;
 It is your talent, and you'll find a theme ;
 Or find, or make one, subject to the smart,
 Howe'er improper, by the rules of art.—
 Why, then—this question, (never out of date)
Cui bono?—Whether sprung from love or hate,
 Can satyr, arm'd with *Churchill's* bolt, prevail,
 Where virtue, reason, and religion fail ?
 Can satyr make a miser ope his door,
 Or turn affection from a favourite whore ?
 Shew me your converts, and I'll praise the skill,
 That e'en can bend that stubborn thing, the Will.
 If then to little purpose, but for praise,
 You pour this torrent of wide-streaming lays,
 I should not wonder, if you miss your aim,
 And where you hop'd applause, inherit blame ;

Satyr,

Satyr, like treason, variously is priz'd;
 The satyr hugg'd, the satyrist despis'd.
 But, to be still consistent, I must grant,
 You certain praise deserve, if praise you want;
 But not for satyr: for our bards, 'tis said,
 Think this the easiest part of all their trade.
 See we not often, as we walk the streets,
 A little whelp that snarls at all he meets?—
 Say, then, you write with ease; this, between friends,
 Perchance the *bard*, but not the *man*, commends;
 Else, why, * *the curriſh* master of this art?
 None write with ease, who write not from the heart.

Well—but the Pence!—Aye, there you are to blame;
 There your foes triumph, saying, *What a shame,*
Readers should be so tax'd?—Why, let them say it,
 'Tis surely not your fault, but their's who pay it.

* Page 32.

Suppose it more ; and who can blame the man,
 Who, by his hand or head, gets what he can,
 In this luxurious pleasurable age ;
** Cover'd with lace and gold,* as on the stage,
 To figure it among companions boon,
 And joyous, as we say, drink down the moon ?—
 And then—to have the pow'r, of doing good,
 To clothe the naked, bring the hungry food,
 Relieve the prisoner in his dire distress ;—
 This is thy self, as well as friend, to bless.
 Ev'n I, and all, who love a generous heart,
 Enjoy, and will applaud, this duteous part.—
 All this is pleasant, and all this is great :
 But shall I envy you this change of state ?
 No ;—when I think how many hearts must bleed,
 In harder bonds, for one your bounty freed ;
 For one made rich, how many *poor indeed !*

I own you great; too strong, to fear a foil,
 Or that your own artillery should recoil;
 It hurts not you, they say, laugh'd at, or mock'd;
 (For who laughs not? and some perhaps are shock'd,
 To hear you bid the matron, † *ope her doors,*
Her daughters cannot, if they would, be whores)?
 But would you call the man, a man of sense,
 Who disrepect compounds for a few pence?
 Who thinks it greatness, or a *virtuous pride*,
 To step o'er conscience with gigantic stride,
 And brave the world to laugh, or to despise;
 When he might praise and honour make his prize?
 You could not praise him, as a moral man;
 You could not but condemn so strange a plan.
 I hold not up the glafs; I owe no grudge;
 Taught to judge no man, I will no man judge.

† The TIMES, p. 29.

But you must serve your friends.—'Tis just, 'tis right,
 To clear a character from fland'rous spite;
 And where the poison spreads beyond the reach
 Of a dissenting frown, or bounded speech;
 There, rousing up thy energy of soul,
 Expose the slanderer from pole to pole;—
 To ward off, with an arm like your's, the blows,
 Intended for your friend, by skulking foes;—
 To save him from oppression's iron claw,
 And, if o'er-stretch'd, at least condemn the law;---
 Due merit to extol, the highest flight
 Your muse can soar;—all this is just, and right.
 But let not *friendship* all this honour claim;
 For will *humanity* not prompt the same?
 I'll say no more, then, to this common plea,
 But add (I hope) a just apostrophe. '

" O sacred

“ O sacred friendship, how abus’d thy name!
 (Two, or two hundred, it is still the same,
 Mere combination all) if *I* must hate,
 Uninjur’d, unprovok’d, at any rate,
 The man another hates (he knows not why),
 And ev’n the laws of God and man defy,
 To serve a cause, to me of no concern ;
 Nay, e’en for this spurn death, damnation spurn.
 To reconcile, to heal, if I can heal,
 The breaches made by a too furious zeal ;—
 Such candid counsel, such advice impart,
 As may asswage the throbings of the heart ;—
 To silence factious murmurs, calm the seas,
 That fain would swell,—with the soft breath of peace ;—
 To make her blessings rightly understood,
 Both for my own and for my country’s good ;—
 I, in my simple way, still think were best ;
 Or Christianity is all a jest.”

But

But—AMOR PATRIÆ was your chief design;—
 (I mean not *Gotham* here, but your's and mine.)
 I scarce could have believ'd it, were I told,
 That *Churchill*'s breath could blow both hot and cold.
 Will your *dear Country* thank you for THE TIMES,
 In which she stands outrèed with horrid crimes;
 Crimes, which with so great virulence you push,
 As reddens the *Italian* with a blush?
 They say, you ne'er correct, nor read again,
 What hath escap'd from your all-daring pen!
 If I accept—charm'd with the flowing song,
 But not the matter—since you think it wrong*,
 And have the grace to blame the rapid *Muse*,—
 Will your *dear Country* take, this lame excuse?

But this apart:—Can *amor patriæ* make
 A man throw firebrands round for mischief-sake?

* Page 4.

Are not her sons to her all dear alike ;
 Who, where they err, she leaves the law to strike ?
 Are you the only minister, with pow'r,
 Where party, or where fancy bids devour,
 To fall upon them, with a ravenous jaw,
 Or tear them down with a sharp-pointed claw ?—
 Think not this image borrow'd from a Print,
 But from *your Bear* * (whatever truth is in't) ;
 Or else not here ; it looks so like abuse ;
 Which, if deserv'd, can be of little use ;
 And, let it fall on you, or other men,
 Sullies alike *the glories of the pen*.
 I cannot therefore, or enjoy, or laugh
 At the *Dissection*, or the *Cap and Staff*.
 Shall men of sense thus worry one another ?
 And brother in full wrath encounter brother ?

* Page 8.

Leave such unworthy sports to *Hockley i' th' Hole*;
 And with your cheerful glass mix soul with soul.
 Passion degrades the dignity of man,
 As discord shortens life's too narrow span;
 Too narrow for the work we have to do:—
 But I'll not preach, especially to you,
 Who knew to preach so well.—So, to return.

You say, you for your *falling country burn*:
 Zealous as he, who, for the falling church,
 Rather than leave his darling in the lurch,
 Halloo'd the mob around, and spread a flame,
 That call'd for better heads than ours to tame.—
 It is a noble passion, a desire,
 That fires each dutious son, and ought to fire;
 So far as decency and truth admit,
 So far as justice and true sterling wit,

Can give assistance; so far we commend,
Not the incendiary, but real friend.

You love your Country:—’Tis a generous love,
It is a debt, a virtue all approve.
But ’ware extremes; the boundary’s so nice,
That virtue may degenerate to vice.
Why, before self, or friend, on *this* our heart?
Because the whole is greater than a part.
But how confin’d this spot, in balance weigh’d
With the whole world, where all require our aid!—
To alienate the minds of honest men,
From their plain duty, by the strength of pen;—
To spread an idle, or unjust report,
And, like the Boys and Frogs, give pain in sport;—
This never can become a man, as man,
A citizen of the world, on Nature’s plan,
Who bids us do all good, to all we can.

Would you but taste from hence what blessings flow,
 'Twould Independence make a heav'n below.

You love your Country—so do I, do all,
Whom from a British heart we Britons call;
Yet, because some things seem not to go right,
To me, and others, of no better sight;
Shall I presume all wrong? and stretch my hand,
To scatter civil discord through the land?
Shall I from prejudice, or some disgust,
Blow up the sparks of malice and distrust?
Shall I be more than proud of flinging dirt,
On those I can, or those I cannot, hurt?
Let fly my wild-goose satyr near the throne,
And stand the chance of drawing vengeance down?
No; gentle Peace! too long thy sweets I've tried,
To quit the shore, and tempt the swelling tide:

[[19]]

Or, were I to embark; who steer'd before,
Might steer for me,---a passenger,---no more.
I trust superior knowledge; and this truth
Prudent experience taught me from my youth,
That *Scot*, or *English*, at the helm, they still,
For all that I can say, do what they will.
Perhaps desirous to correct, as thou;
But when I (such the distance) know not how,
Rather than write as no man ever wrote,
Rather than snarle, abuse, or cut a throat,
Peace I prefer; and from that *Golden Rule*,
(Whether it from a wise man came, or fool;
For fools sometimes speak truth) learn, right or wrong,
While I my pudding eat, to hold my tongue.

You love your Country:—Love it still; for who
A greater obligation owes than you?

D 2

To

To you so very generous, mild, and kind, I know so
 While to your faults, if you have faults, so blind,
 As no contested warrants to employ ;
 Still you your hands, and eyes, and ears, enjoy :
 And what is more, you still triumphant hold
 An Independency *in lace and gold* ;
 And long may you enjoy them, free from smart ;
 But long enjoy them with a grateful heart.
 Blessings, deserv'd, or not, so great and good,
 Challenge from you, and all men, gratitude :
 That gratitude, which, in a bard-like way,
 No one so well as *Churchill* can repay.

You need not fly, to grace the striking page
 With some *Great Noble*, to a former age ;
 (Ages, I think, are pretty much the same,
 Tho' some one honour, some another, claim ;)

Nor from the grave, to bring such worthies back,
 Need you your lab'ring heart, or bend, or crack* ;
 For tho' (strange compliment!) you this avow,
 † *Nor can a man be found, as times go now;*
 Look, with an eye impartial, look around,
 And there are *some*, I doubt not, to be found ;
 At least among *your* friends ; and *others* too,
True to their King, and to their Country true ;
 Both great and good ; worthy a lasting name ;
 While *every Muse conspires to swell their fame* ;
 Worthy an *Epic* ; tho' a task too hard,
 I'm apt to fear, for any modern bard ;
 Except a *Churchill* think it not too great ;
 Whose only shoulders could support the weight.
 Here strain thy pow'rs, but not thy conscience strain ;
 Ambitious to grow rich, in other gain,

* Page 12.

† The TIMES, p. 29.

A fame as great, and noble, as your cause,
 Your country's thanks, a general applause:
 Where conscious of abuse, abuse recall,
 And praising one, yet study to please all.
 So shall your works, tho' num'rous, ever stand
 Among the first-rate classics of the land.
 While for a card, a sketch, an epigram, what not?
I seek no praise, content to be forgot;
 Forgot these rhymes; but not forgot their end;
He's to himself a friend, who is a friend
To all mankind; and tho' not rich, not poor;
 Tho' not like you renown'd, yet not obscure;
 Ever in harmless *Independency* secure.

F I N I S.